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OCA 88-0757
1 April 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

FROM: John L. Helgerson
Director of Congressional Affairs

SUBJECT: Your Breakfast Meeting on 19 April with Representative Amo Houghton (R., NY)

You are scheduled to host a breakfast for Representative Amo Houghton on 19 April at 8 a.m. in your dining room. You will recall that you met with Mr. Houghton last summer at Hilton Head. Also attending will be Bob Gates, Dick Stolz, [redacted] and myself. STAT

Mr. Houghton was born in 1926 in Corning, New York; he is a Harvard graduate. Houghton served for 19 years as chief operating officer of the Corning Glass Works Company in Corning. The company's top ranks have been stocked with members of Houghton's family, some of whom also held distinguished public offices. Houghton's father was an ambassador to France; his grandfather, Alanson Bigelow Houghton, was both an ambassador and a U.S. representative.

In 1986 Mr. Houghton chose to cap his distinguished business career by running for Congress, and he cruised to a comfortable victory of 60% in the 34th district of New York, the "Southern Tier", which extends from Lake Erie in the West to Elmira in the East. He serves on both the Budget and Government Operations Committees.

Mr. Houghton was one of the handful of Republicans who voted against the House Bill on aid for the Nicaraguan Resistance on 3 February 1988. He voted for the latest $48 million package on 30 March.

This is his first visit to the Agency, and we have not provided him with any special briefings. We presume he would enjoy hearing about your priorities as DCI, and some discussion of current key areas such as Nicaragua, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, or arms control monitoring.

[redacted] STAT

John L. Helgerson

Attachments

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BIOGRAPHY

Name (including party/state:) Amo Houghton (R., NY)

District: Corning; Southern Tier; Jamestown, and Elmira

First elected: 1986 Up for re-election: 1988 Winning %: 60

Past service on intelligence committee: Yes: No: X

Current service on intelligence committee: Yes: No: X

Term on intelligence committee expires: N/A

Other committee assignments: Budget and Government Operations

Major legislative interests:

Key votes:

Intelligence interests:

Visits to CIA facilities: None

Last contact with DCI/DDCI: 25 Sept 1987 (note of gratitude from Houghton); 21 Oct 87 (acknowledgment letter to Houghton)

Recent correspondence:

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34 Amo Houghton (R)

Of Corning — Elected 1986

Born: Aug. 7, 1926, Corning, N.Y.
Education: Harvard U., B.A. 1950, M.B.A. 1952.
Military Career: Marine Corps, 1945-46.
Occupation: Glassworks company executive.
Family: Wife, Ruth West; four children.
Religion: Episcopalian.
Political Career: No previous office.
Capitol Office: 1217 Longworth Bldg. 20515; 225-3161.

The Path to Washington: Houghton literally cruised to a comfortable first-term victory in 1986. Whether he was traveling the district in his plush motor home — stocked with liquor, cigars, and homemade cookies — or whether he was riding in his private plane, Houghton ran a first-class campaign. Such comfort befits a wealthy corporate executive who chose to cap a distinguished business career with a bid for Congress.

A scion of one of the district's most prominent families, and one of the nation's wealthiest, Houghton served for 19 years as chief operating officer of the Corning Glass Works Company in the Steuben County town of Corning. The company's top ranks have long been stocked with members of Houghton's family, some of whom also held distinguished public offices. Houghton's father was an ambassador to France; his grandfather, Alanson Bigelow Houghton, was both an ambassador and U.S. representative.

Amory Houghton's political opportunity appeared suddenly in the spring of 1986, when Democratic incumbent Stan Lundine was tapped to run for lieutenant governor. Before Lundine's departure, Houghton had been spending much of his time on efforts to provide economic relief for the African nation of Zimbabwe. When the congressional vacancy appeared, he switched his sights closer to home.

Houghton had never been particularly active in local party affairs, but he had little trouble securing the GOP nomination in the 34th District. Articulate and blessed with a self-deprecating sense of humor, Houghton, known to his friends as "Amo," adapted to the campaign trail fairly easily. He was already a popular figure in his home town, where roughly 4,000 people are employed by the glassworks company. Good relations between the town and the company were cemented in 1972, when Corning Glass Works helped finance restoration after a devasting flood.

Houghton pointed to his experience at the company as testimony to his ability to create jobs — a key issue in a district where unemployment remains well above the national average. He pointed to his service as co-chairman of the Labor-Industry Coalition on International Trade, a group that lobbied heavily for the Democratic trade bill in the last Congress.

Houghton's Democratic opponent, Cattaraugus County District Attorney Larry Himelein, tried to debunk some of Houghton's economic development claims, and criticized him for service on the Grace commission, where, he said, the Republican supported measures that would hurt small businesses.

With Houghton spending more than any candidate had ever spent in the 34th District, Himelein hoped to pick up support from voters who considered the Republican too much of a Brahmin. "Running for Congress isn't going to finishing school, it's not going to the country club," Himelein told a reporter during the campaign.

But Himelein's campaign was slow to get off the ground, giving him little chance to overcome a well-financed Republican in a GOP-leaning district. And while Houghton's posh campaign style brought him some criticism and a satirical front-page profile in *The Wall Street Journal*, his affable nature helped to prevent it from becoming an issue.

In the end, Houghton lost only Cattaraugus County, Himelein's home territory. In his own home county, Steuben, the Republican won with more than 75 percent, surpassing President Reagan's 1984 margin.

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